



The Most Hon. Dr. Hubert Minnis

**Prime Minister and Minister of Finance
Commonwealth of the Bahamas**

Swearing-in of the Hon. Iram Lewis as

Minister of Youth, Sports and Culture

Office of The Governor General

Monday, 1 March 2021

1:30 P.M.

Your Excellency;

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am pleased that the Hon. Iram Lewis has accepted the appointment as Minister of Youth, Sports and Culture.

On behalf of the Government and people of The Bahamas may I congratulate him on his appointment.

We recall in memory his deceased son, Tavarious, and his late father, Rev. Aram Lewis.

Iram: May their memories and your love for them bless and sustain you in your new assignment.

This is another proud day for the people of Grand Bahama, and for Water Cay, the birthplace of Minister Lewis.

This is a particularly proud day for the people of Central Grand Bahama, whom he serves as their Member of Parliament.

I know that Your Excellency must also be proud of his fellow-Grand Bahamian.

Your Excellency;

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I thank Minister Lewis for his service as Minister of State, in the Ministry of Disaster

Preparedness, Management and Reconstruction.

An architect by profession, he studied at the University of The Bahamas and Tuskegee University, in Tuskegee, Alabama in the United States.

At Tuskegee, he was awarded the American Institute Of Architects Gold Medallion for Most Outstanding Architectural Graduate Student.

Iram Lewis has a deep commitment to service, including service as President of The Kiwanis Club, Cable Beach.

Those of a certain age, of which I count myself, remember Iram on the world stage representing The Bahamas as an athlete at various international events.

He proudly represented The Bahamas at the Atlanta, USA, Olympic Games in

1996 and at the 2000 Sydney, Australia, Olympics.

He has served as President of The Grand Bahama Athletics Association, as Vice President of the Bahamas Association of Athletic Associations, the governing body for athletics in The Bahamas, and as Vice President of The Bahamas Olympic Committee.

The sports community know him well.
And he knows the community, of which he
is a longstanding member.

They know him as a hard worker, as a
team player and colleague, and as
someone deeply committed to the role of
sports and athletics in national development
and in the development of young
Bahamians.

Your Excellency;

Ladies and Gentlemen:

May I impress upon Minister Lewis the necessity and responsibility of sustained and collegial dialogue with youth, sports, cultural groups, and organizations.

I invite you to immediately engage in sustained outreach to the Ministry's many stakeholders.

In his character and in his athletic career, Iram has demonstrated a

commitment to working in partnership with others to achieve shared values and shared goals.

These qualities will serve him well in his portfolio.

Your Excellency;

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The ministry responsible for culture should have as an overarching focus: the preservation, protection and survival of the

culture and heritage of The Bahamas and its transmission to future generations.

Such a ministry must not be primarily events driven, although events are important because they help us to showcase and to celebrate our culture, the arts, and to inform new generations of Bahamians, and the world about who are as a people.

We must promote and preserve our culture on the ground and in the sinews

tissue and lifeblood of our daily lives: in what we eat, what we listen too, how we

 speak, how we create meaning through the arts, and the many other features that make us uniquely Bahamian.

Even as a culture has its material aspects and artefacts, there is much of life and culture that are intangible, and which help to evoke and to make memories and

meaning and songs of the heart, and stories of the imagination.

We must cultivate the essence of being Bahamian in the spirits and hearts of our people, the same kind of essence as when we are moved or inspired by a musical composition by composer Adrian Archer, or the artistry of Max Taylor, or the poetry of Patricia Glinton-Meicholas, or the drumbeat of a goatskin drum by a young Bahamian boy or girl in Junior Junkanoo.

May I commend to Minister Lewis, the portion of the Economic Committee Report on the Orange Economy.

I applaud the work of the subcommittee who produced this section of the Report.

Let me say clearly that recommendations on the Orange Economy are not forgotten and a number of them will be implemented.

The development of our creative economy is an essential part of cultural and economic development.

Our vision is the promotion of scores of Bahamian cultural entrepreneurs, artists and artisans, craftspeople, writers, film makers and others who employ our cultural riches in the world of commerce.

Your Excellency;

Ladies and Gentlemen:

We all agree on the vital and sustaining role of young people in our Bahamas.

I know that Iram will reach out to and engage in dialogue with the myriad of youth organizations in the country.

Iram: Your focus around the Cabinet table in the dynamic integration of the gifts and needs of young Bahamians in every aspect of government.

You must advocate for land, for home ownership, for business and training opportunities, for health care, for addressing climate change.

You are now cast in the vital role of being one of the leading advocates for young people in every area of national life.

In so doing, you are touching the future by ensuring greater opportunity for our youth and young adults in the present.

May I particularly emphasize youth development programs which contribute to character development, civility, health and wellness, and a deeper appreciation of Bahamian culture, arts and heritage.

Your Excellency;

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Iram knows well the worlds of sports and athletics.

We have spoken about the reintroduction of the Bahamas Games.

I have asked him to undertake an inventory of sports facilities, especially in the Family Islands, including where we need to construct or to expand facilities.

In our comprehensive vision for Family Island development, we want to ensure that there are proper facilities for athletics,

recreation, health and well-being and for community development.

Iram will also ensure more scholarship opportunities for Bahamian athletes.

I wish to note our intention to create a sports development foundation, which will be a public/private partnership.

The foundation will help to develop:

- sport sector policy;
- improved sports facilities;

- greater opportunities for funding from the private sector;
- the identification of sports talent;
- more coaching expertise;
- and the promotion of international professional teams training in The Bahamas, among other functions.

This foundation will work in tandem with ministry officials and national stakeholders to advance sport and athletics in the country.

Your Excellency;

Ladies and Gentlemen:

May I close by thanking the many Bahamians and residents who work tirelessly and passionately in fields of sports and athletics; those work in youth development; and those who help to preserve and celebrate our culture and heritage.

May I also thank the staff at the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture for their dedication.

I thank His Excellency and the staff of Government House for their gracious hospitality.

May God bless Iram in his new role.

May God bless our Bahamas.

Thank you and good morning.
